

Scribes
Testimonies
Inspiration & Translation

RFS June 1980

JOSEPH'S SCRIBES

1. Emma Hale Smith (Bidamon)
2. Martin Harris
3. Oliver Cowdery
4. Christian Whitmer
5. John Whitmer
6. Samuel H. Smith
7. Reuben Hale
- [8. Alva Hale ?]
- [9. David Whitmer ?]

Surviving portions of the original Book of Mormon MS evidence only the writing of Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, along with an unknown hand or hands--see Dean C. Jessee in BYU Studies, X (Spring 1970), 259-78.

TESTIMONIES

David Whitmer

No man could read it, but God gave to an unlearned boy the gift to translate it.

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.

(D. Whitmer, An Address to All Believers in Christ [Richmond, MO, 1887], p. 12)

In a letter ca. Dec 9, 1886, from Richmond, MO, D. Whitmer speaks of "a revelation that was given through the 'stone' and is true." . . .

A few months after Joseph had finished translating, he gave the "stone" to Oliver, and told me and all of us that he was through except to preach the gospel; and he did not use the stone anymore.

(Saints' Herald, 34 [Feb 5, 1887], p. 92b)

Article based on interview with D. Whitmer:

With an unpoetical crowbar he removed the cover, when were revealed to his astonished sight a number of golden plates, and a singular stone. The plates were each about 6x10 inches in size, and were held together by a brazen ring passing through a hole near the top, so that the entire package could be opened like a book. On these plates were mystic characters that no man could decipher. A learned philologist in New York city was consulted but confessed his utter ignorance of the language embodied in the symbols. But a stone had been found with the plates, shaped like a pair of ordinary spectacles, though much larger, and at least half an inch in thickness, and perfectly opaque save to the prophetic vision of Joseph Smith. On the tablets or plates were engraven the records of the lost tribe of Nephites, and the stone was

THE URIM AND THUMMIM,

by which the seers of old had deciphered the mysteries of the universe.

(col. 3)

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In the spring of 1829, even Harmony became too hot for Joseph, and he sent to New York for succor. David Whitmer started out in a wagon, drove 160 miles to Harmony, took Smith and Cowdery as passengers, and conveyed them thence to his father's house, where they remained in retirement until September, completing the translation. During all these months David had free access to their room, and was

AN EYE-WITNESS TO THE METHOD OF PROCEDURE.

The plates were not before Joseph while he translated, but seem to have been removed by the custodian angel. The method pursued was commonplace but nevertheless effective. Having placed the Urim and Thummim in his hat, Joseph placed the hat over his face, and with prophetic eyes read the invisible symbols

David Whitmer (cont.)

syllable by syllable and word by word, while Cowdery or Harris acted as recorders. "So illiterate was Joseph at that time," said Mr. Whitmer, "that he didn't even know that Jerusalem was a walled city, and he was utterly unable to pronounce many of the names which the magic power of the Urim and Thummim revealed, and therefore spelled them out in syllables, and the more erudite scribe put them together. The stone was the same used by the Jaredites at Babel. I have frequently placed it to my eyes but could see nothing through it. I have seen Joseph, however, place it to his eyes and instantly read signs 160 miles distant and tell exactly what was transpiring there. When I went to Harmony after him he told me the name of every hotel at which I had stopped on the road, read the signs, and described various scenes without having ever received any information from me." The unbelievers frequently attempted to confound the faithful few by asking them if they supposed

"THAT FOOL FOY"

could write anything, or that God would select such a wretch as a medium of communicating His will. The ready answer was that God was not very particular as to the instruments used to accomplish certain desired ends, and that devils as well as angels had their places in His economy.

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. . . Joseph Smith, the prophet, led by divine agencies, and found the casket containing the sacred records, and the Urim and Thummim by which the "reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphics might be deciphered, and translated them in the presence of David Whitmer, . . .

("The Golden Tables," The Chicago Times, 20 [Saturday Morning, August 7, 1875], p. 1, cols. 3-4)

Article based on Omaha Herald interview with D. Whitmer:

The first 116 pages when completed were by permission intrusted to the hands of Martin Harris, who carried them home to his incredulous relatives in triumph, hoping by the exhibition to convert his family and kinfolk from their uncompromising hostility to the religious premises he had adopted. . . . They were never found and were never replaced, so that the Book of Mormon is today minus just 116 pages of the original matter, which would increase the volume fully one-fourth of its present size. This unpardonable carelessness evoked the stormiest kind of chastisement from the Lord, who took from the prophet the Urim and Thummim and otherwise expressed his condemnation. By fervent prayer and by otherwise humbling himself, the prophet, however, again found favor, and was presented with a strange, oval-shaped, chocolate-colored stone, about the size of an egg, only more flat, which, it was promised, should serve the same purpose as the missing Urim and Thummim (the latter was a pair of transparent stones set in a bow-shaped frame and very much resembled a pair of spectacles). With this stone all of the present Book of Mormon was translated.

(Omaha Herald, reprinted in the Chicago Inter-Ocean, Oct 17, 1886, and in the Saints' Herald, 33 [Nov 13, 1886], 706; 109 [Nov 15, 1962], 799-800, the accuracy of which, however, was challenged by Whitmer himself in Saints' Herald, 33 [Dec 4, 1886], 764-5)

David Whitmer (cont.)

December 15, 1885 interview with D. Whitmer:

O. Cowdery had heard of Smith's find of a golden treasure (ca. June 1829), traveled to see him, and heard of death threats against Smith unless he divided the treasure. Cowdery viewed the treasure, was mystified, and invited David Whitmer—who was also allowed to view it. There were golden plates, 8" x 10" each, as thick as sheet tin, and all bound by three gold rings, a large portion of the volume sealed, the loose pages engraved with hieroglyphics. Also with the plates was a pair of spectacles set in silver bows. Cowdery and Whitmer were also shown the plates' receptacle on the Hill Cumorah.

The translation commenced in the Whitmer home and a blanket was used only to prevent visitors from seeing the work—the entire household (Oliver, Emma, et al.) viewed the work of translation firsthand: Thus, the blanket divided the room as a portiere for privacy only. The plates were there. The translation took about 8 months. The scribes included Emma, Oliver, Christian Whitmer, et al. (col. 3)

Prayer preceded each session of translation. The scribes sat at the table opposite Smith and worked in shifts. Those not writing would sit casually about the room. Method: Smith would affix the spectacles to his eyes, take the plates, and translate the characters one at a time. Each character would appear to the seer in succession, and the English translation just under it, when viewed through the glasses. Some-
 times a single word, and frequently a whole sentence. Oliver and David helped with the pronouncing of some biblical words.

Some offense of Joseph's displeased the Lord (became a braggart of his status), and the angel took the plates and spectacles away.

Harris took and then lost 16 plates, which were then recovered by the angel, but work was suspended for a while. The plates were never restored to Joseph—nor the spectacles, but a different Urim & Thummim—one oval or kidney-shaped—a seer's stone, which he placed in his hat, and, face in hat, he would see character and translation on the stone.

The Lord withheld the sealed portion from translation in order to assess the effect of the unsealed portion.

Smith, Cowdery, Whitmer, and Harris were designated Apostles of the Lord after translation, and were gathered to view the plates brought by an angel to a pasture (table on which were the plates of gold, the brass plates of Laban; brought nearly to the feet of the witnesses). (col. 4)

D. Whitmer maintained his apostleship as a direct call from heaven through an angel of the Lord—even on his death-bed [however, he did not die that year]. (col. 5) ("The Book of Mormon," The Chicago Tribune, 17 Dec 1885, p. 3, cols. 3-5; cf. Millennial Star, 48:36)

~~B. Whitmer letter ca. Dec 9, 1886, from Richmond, MO: Chicago Times, Oct 14, 1881,~~

David Whitmer said that one character could make from a single word to two lines of manuscript. (~~Saints Herald, 34 [Feb 5, 1887], 928; G. Reynolds, Myth of Manuscript Found, p. 83)~~

Interview by J. L. Traugber, Jr., with D. Whitmer, ¹³ October 1879:

With the sanction of David Whitmer, and by his authority, I now state that he does not say that Joseph Smith ever translated in his presence by aid of Urim and Thummim; but by means of one dark colored, opaque stone, called a "Seer Stone," which was placed in the crown of a hat, into which Joseph put his face, so as to exclude the external light. Then, a spiritual light would shine

David Whitmer (cont.)

forth, and parchment would appear before Joseph, upon which was a line of characters from the plates, and under it, the translation in English; at least, so Joseph said:

(Saints' Herald, 26 [Nov 15, 1879], 341; 109 [Nov 15, 1962], 800)

(cf. E. B. Muller & E. L. Kelly, in Saints' Herald, 27 [Jul, 1880], 76)

Earlier interview apparently edited and reprinted:

Treasure found by J. Smith; D. Whitmer told by an awed O. Cowdery to come at once to view the treasure. Local yokels demanded a share of the treasure. The plates were 8" x 4", thick as sheet tin and bound with three golden rings, a large portion well-sealed, and with hieroglyphics on loose pages; also a pair of spectacles set in silver bows. A blanket divided the room for privacy. The spectacles were silver rimmed. Plates were deciphered at table, the volume open, one scribe after another taking dictation (a quartet of scribes in shifts). O. Cowdery's biblical knowledge of immense aid in Smith's stumbling over big words.

When Smith became arrogant and spoke self-importantly about the contents of the plates, the angel came and took them and the spectacles in full view of those in the room.

Martin Harris took 16 golden plates home, etc. (see 17 Dec 1885 Tribune acct.). Joseph was punished for this by having the plates and spectacles taken at that time also, and an egg-shaped seer-stone given as a replacement, and Smith was instructed to place it in the hat with his face--and the characters and translation would appear on the stone. The plates were never restored.

Smith called the three "apostles of the Lord." They were to be ordained and shown plates--so an angel, in dazzling light brighter than the sun, brought a table with gold plates and brass plates of Laban. The four were charged by the angel to go forth and preach the doctrines of the Book of Mormon to the world, after inspecting the plates.

(col. 1)

("Journey About Ended," The Chicago Times, Jan 24, 1888, p. 8, col. 1)

Interview with David Whitmer, Jan 23, 1888:

The plates were 8" x 7", thickness of sheet tin, bound with three gold rings (a large portion sealed). Also an immense pair of spectacles set in silver bow. The plates and specs taken when Smith bragged to neighbors, and replaced only by a different shape Urim & Thummim and received direct revelation through it with his face in a hat with the stone.

("An Old Mormons Closing Hours," The Chicago Tribune, Jan 24, 1888, p. 8, col. 4)

Interview with D. Whitmer in 1881:

I, as well as all of my father's family, Smith's wife, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris were present during the translation. The translation was by Smith, and the manner as follows: "He had two small stones of a chocolate color, nearly egg shaped and perfectly smooth, but not transparent, called interpreters, which were given him with the plates. He did not use the plates in the translation, but would hold the interpreters to his eyes and cover his face with a hat, excluding all light.

(Kansas City Journal, June 5, 1881, cited in Saints' Herald, 28 [July 1, 1881], 198; 109 [Nov 15, 1962], 800).

David Whitmer (cont.)

Statement of September 15, 1882, by D. Whitmer:

He was a religious and straightforward man. He had to be; for he was illiterate and he could do nothing himself. He had to trust in God. He could not translate unless he was humble and possessed the right feelings towards everyone. To illustrate so you can see: One morning when he was getting ready to continue the translation, something went wrong about the house and he was put out about it. Something that Emma, his wife, had done. Oliver and I went upstairs and Joseph came up soon after to continue the translation but he could not do anything. He could not translate a single syllable. He went downstairs, out into the orchard, and made supplication to the Lord; was gone about an hour—came back to the house and asked Emma's forgiveness and then came upstairs where we were and then the translation went^a all right. He could do nothing save he was humble and faithful.

(Braden and Kelly Debate: Public Discussion, etc., at Kirtland, Ohio, Feb 12 - Mar 8, 1884 [St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., n.d./Independence: Herald House, 1913], p. 186; cf. Saints' Herald, 29:68, 33:13)

The D. Whitmer view according to T. W. Smith:

I personally heard him state in January of 1877 in his own house in Richmond, Ray County, Mo . . . that he saw Joseph translate, by the aid of the Urim and Thummim, time and time again, . . . written mainly by Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, as the translation was being read by the aid of the Urim and Thummim of the characters on the plates by Joseph Smith (Fall River Herald article reprinted in Saints' Herald, 26 [Apr 15, 1879], 128; cf. Saints' Herald, 27 [Jan 1, 1880], 13; 27 [Feb 15, 1880], 67; it is claimed that O. Pratt and J. F. Smith reported the same result of their Jan 1879 interview with Whitmer in the Deseret Evening News, and likewise by E. D. Friggs and R. Etzenhouser of their Jan 1884 interview printed in the Saints' Herald, and finally also by a reporter for the St. Louis Republican in July 1884).

Joseph Smith, Jr. (cont.)

Joseph's 1838 official history also contains the following description:

. . . there were two stones in silver bows--and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim--deposited with the plates; and the possession and use of these stones were what constituted "Seers" in ancient or former times; and that God had prepared them for the purpose of translating the book.

(T&S, III:753 = Roberts, HC, I:12; cf. Mosiah 28:13; Lucy Mack Smith, Biographical Sketches, p. 107)

Joseph's "New Translation" of the Bible contains the following line:

Cephas, which is, by interpretation, a seer, or a stone.

(John 1:42 IV; cf. Coptic Gospel According to Thomas, Logion 19, and D&C 130:8-11)

Orange, Ohio, Conference, October 25, 1831, in response to a question, Joseph said that it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and also said that it was not expedient for him to relate these things.

("Far West Record," p. 13 = Roberts, HC, I:220, note)

Letter to J. A. Bennett, November 13, 1843:

I translated the Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics the knowledge of which was lost to the world.

(Roberts, HC, VI:74)

The disposition of plates, spectacles, and breastplate in the official history:

At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the Breastplate. On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to the place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me . . . until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected.

* * *

. . . by the wisdom of God, they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight.

(T&S, III:771 = Roberts, HC, I:18-19 = FGP JS 2:59-60)

Mode of receipt of D&C 3 in July 1828:

. . . behold, the former heavenly messenger appeared and handed to me the Urim and Thummim again--for it had been taken from me in consequence of my having wearied the Lord in asking for the privilege of letting Martin Harris take the writings, which he lost . . .

* * *

After I had obtained the above revelation, both plates and the Urim and Thummim were taken from me again; but in a few days they were returned to me, when I inquired of the Lord, . . .

(T&S, III:786 & HC, I:21, 23)

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Joseph Smith, Jr. (Cont.)

Mode of receipt of D&C §§6, 11, 17:

I inquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim, and obtained the following:

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. . . , I inquired of the Lord through the Urim and Thummim, and received for him the following:

* * *

. . . ; and through the Urim and Thummim, I obtained of the Lord for them the following:

(T&S, III:853, 885, 897 = HC, I:33, 45, 53)

His mother's version of her son's account of his punishment for the Harris incident:

" . . . , I would of necessity have to suffer the consequences of his indiscretion, and I must now give up the Urim and Thummim into his (the angel's) hands.

"This I did as I was directed, and as I handed them to him, he remarked, 'If you are very humble and penitent, it may be you will receive them again; if so, it will be on the twenty-second of next September.'"

* * *

"After the angel left me," said he, "I continued my supplications to God, without cessation, and on the twenty-second of September, I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the Urim and Thummim, with which I have again commenced translating, and Emma writes for me, but the angel said that the Lord would send me a scribe, and I trust his promise will be verified. The angel seemed pleased with me when he gave me back the Urim and Thummim, and he told me that the Lord loved me, for my faithfulness and humility."

(Lucy Mack Smith, Biographical Sketches of Joseph, 1st ed. [1853], pp. 125-6)

Emma Hale Smith Bidamon

Interview by her son, Joseph, her husband, and others, during early 1879:

Q. What of the truth of Mormonism?

A. I know Mormonism to be the truth; and believe the Church to have been established by divine direction. I have complete faith in it. In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.

Q. Had he not a book or manuscript from which he read, or dictated to you?

A. He had neither manuscript nor book to read from.

Q. Could he not have had, and you not know it?

A. If he had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me.

Q. Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?

A. The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book.

Q. Where did father and Oliver Cowdery write?

A. Oliver Cowdery and your father wrote in the room where I was at work.

Q. Could not father have dictated the Book of Mormon to you, Oliver Cowdery and the others who wrote for him, after having first written it, or having first read it out of some book?

A. Joseph Smith could neither write nor dictate a coherent and well-worded letter; let alone dictating a book like the Book of Mormon. And, though I was an active participant in the scenes that transpired, and was present during the translation of the plates, and had cognizance of things as they transpired, it is marvelous to me, "a marvel and a wonder," as much so as to any one else.

Q. I should suppose that you would have uncovered the plates and examined them?

A. I did not attempt to handle the plates, other than I have told you, nor uncover them to look at them. I was satisfied that it was the work of God, and therefore did not feel it to be necessary to do so.

Major Bidamon here suggested: Did Mr. Smith forbid your examining the plates?

A. I do not think he did. I knew that he had them, and was not specially curious about them. I moved them from place to place on the table, as it was necessary in doing my work.

Q. Mother, what is your belief about the authenticity, or origin of the Book of Mormon?

A. My belief is that the Book of Mormon is of divine authenticity--I have not the slightest doubt of it. I am satisfied that no man could have dictated the writing of the manuscripts unless he was inspired; for, when acting as his scribe, your father would dictate to me hour after hour; and when returning after meals, or after interruptions, he would at once begin where he had left off, without either seeing the manuscript or having any portion of it read to him. This was a usual thing for him to do. It would have been improbable that a learned man could do this; and for one so ignorant and unlearned as he was it was simply impossible.

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Q. What do you think of David Whitmer?

A. David Whitmer I believe to be an honest and truthful man. I think what he states may be relied on.

(Saints' Herald, 26 [Oct 1, 1879], 289-290)

Emma Hale Smith Bidamon (cont.)

Unpublished letter from Emma to Mrs. George W. Pilgrim (Nauvoo, Mar 27, 1870):
 Nauvoo March 27, 187[0]*

Mrs Pilgrim .

I acknowledge the receipt of a letter from you a long time ago, and will now try to answer it, I should have done so immediately if I had not been called away from home by Joseph, his oldest daughter was very sick with the lung fever, and she was so anxious to see me that her father sent for me When I got there Emma was better, her fever was checked but she was very weak, but I found my son Alexander's wife just taken with the same fever the day before the fever abated, She was so very bad that Joseph telegraphed to Alexander who was then in San Francisco Cal to come home, and he brought my Son David home with him who had been quite sick before they started for home, and I had to stay at Plano a week longer before Alex Wife was well enough to go home with me, but thank God the sick all recovered, through the prayer of faith and the administrations of the ordinances, and good nursing, without being under the painfull nessity of caling on a physetion, when health was sufficiently restored, I started for home in Nauvoo bringing David and Emma home with me...

Now I would not troubled you with this long detail of events, but I feel it is due to you, that you should know what was the cause of my long delay, and also that you may

[reverse]

know that it has not been willfull neglect or as wicked indifference to the subject of your inquiry as I always feel a peculiar satisfaction in giving all the information on that subject that I can

Now the first that my husband translated, was translated by the use of Urim and Thummim, and that was the part that Martin Harris lost. after that he used a small stone, not exactly black, but was rather a dark color, I cannot tell whether that account in the Times and Seasons is correct or not because some one stole all my books and I have none to refer to at present, if I can find one that has that account I will tell you what is true and what is not. Now you will allow me to call you Sister Pilgrim as Joseph called you so, and please write to me again and let me know how you get along, and how Mr Hedrick, and Mr McLelland manages with regard to the Church, do they have any regular Church organisation, or not, and what their morral and religious influence is among the people there.

May God bless you is the prayer of your sister in the gospel

Emma Bidamon

*final number in year-date is unclear, and the letter must be dated by historical context. 1876 is thus impossible, and the RLDS Church Archives classifies the letter as 1870. RLDS Archives P4 f20.

Oliver Cowdery

History letter, September 7, 1834:

These were days never to be forgotten--to sit under the sound of a voice dictated by the inspiration of heaven, . . . Day after day I continued uninterrupted to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, "Interpreters," the history or record, called "The book of Mormon."

(LDS Messenger & Advocate, I [Oct 1834], 14 = Times & Seasons, II [Nov 1, 1840], 201)

Testimony at October 1848 Iowa Conference, recorded by Reuben Miller, 21 Oct 1848:

I wrote with my own pen the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the Prophet as he translated it by the gift and power of God by means of the Urim and Thummim, or as it ~~is~~ called by that book, holy interpreters. I beheld with my eyes and handled with my hands the gold plates from which it was translated. I also beheld the Interpreters.

(Journal of Reuben Miller, 21 Oct 1848, in Ensign, 7:9 [Sept 1977], 80)

quote from Lancaster & Appleton's Daveror News April 13, 1859

Samuel W. Richards recollection, May 25, 1907, of his 1848 meeting with Cowdery:

He represented Joseph as sitting at a table with the plates before him, translating them by means of the Urim and Thummim, while he (Oliver) sat beside him writing every word as Joseph spoke them to him. This was done by holding the "translators" over the hieroglyphics, the translation appearing distinctly on the instrument, which had been touched by the finger of God, and dedicated and consecrated for the express purpose of translating languages. Every word was distinctly visible even to every letter; and if Oliver omitted a word or failed to spell a word correctly, the translation remained on the "interpreter" until it was copied correctly.

(S. W. Richards Statement, BYU Special Collections Library, and in Ensign, 7:9)

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Martin Harris

Excerpt from letter of Nov 30, 1881 (SLC), by Edward Stevenson:

Martin Harris related an incident that occurred during the time that he wrote that portion of the translation of the Book of Mormon which he was favored to write direct from the mouth of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said that the Prophet possessed a seer stone, by which he was enabled to translate as well as from the Urim and Thummim, and for convenience he then used the seer stone. Martin explained the translation as follows: By aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, "Written," and if correctly written, that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used. Martin said, after continued translation they would become weary, and would go down to the river and exercise by throwing stones out on the river, etc. While so doing on one occasion, Martin found a stone very much resembling the one used for translating, and on resuming their labor of translation, Martin put in place the stone that he had found. He said that the Prophet remained silent, unusually and intently gazing in darkness, no traces of the usual sentences appearing. Much surprised, Joseph exclaimed, "Martin! What is the matter? All is as dark as Egypt!" Martin's countenance betrayed him, and the Prophet asked Martin why he had done so. Martin said, to stop the mouths of fools, who had told him that the Prophet had learned those sentences and was merely repeating them, etc.

Martin said further that the seer stone differed in appearance entirely from the Urim and Thummim that was obtained with the plates, which were two clear stones set in two rims, very much resembling spectacles, only they were much larger. Martin said there were not many pages translated while he wrote, after which Oliver Cowdery and others did the writing.

(Stevenson's account of Harris' Sunday Morning lecture in SLC, Sept 4, 1870, published in Deseret News of Nov 30, 1881, and in the LDS Millennial Star, 44 [Feb 6, 1882], 86-87; secondary version in Andrew Jenson, ed., Historical Record, VI:216-7 [May 1887])

In the first place, he told me of this stone, and proposed to bind it on his eyes, and run a race with me in the woods. A few days after this, I was at the house of his father in Manchester, two miles south of Palmyra village, and was picking my teeth with a pin while sitting on the bars. The pin caught in my teeth, and dropped from my fingers into the shavings and straw. I jumped from the bars and looked for it. Joseph and Northrop Sweet also did the same. We could not find it. I then took Joseph on surprise, and said to him--I said, "Take your stone;" I had never seen it, and did not know that he had it with him. He had it in his pocket. He took it and placed it in his hat--the old white hat--and placed his face in his hat. I watched him closely to see that he did not look to one side; he reached out his hand beyond me on the right, and moved a little stick, and there I saw the pin, which he picked up and gave to me. I know he did not look out of the hat until after he had picked up the pin.

(interview in Tiffany's Monthly, 1859, p. 165)

Lucy Mack Smith

A short time before the house was completed, a man, by the name of Josiah Stoyal, came from Chenango county, New York, with the view of getting Joseph to assist him in digging for a silver mine. He came for Joseph on account of having heard that he possessed certain keys, by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye.

(Lucy, Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet [1853], pp. 91-2]

I trembled so with fear, lest all might be lost in consequence of some failure in keeping the commandments of God, that I was under the necessity of leaving the room in order to conceal my feelings. Joseph saw this, and said, "Do not be uneasy, mother, all is right--see here, I have got a key."

I knew not what he meant, but took the article of which he spoke into my hands, and, upon examination, found that it consisted of two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, and the glasses were set in silver bows, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old fashioned spectacles. He took them again and left me, but said nothing respecting the Record.

(Lucy, Biographical Sketches, 1st ed. [1853]; p. 101; cf. Stevenson, p. 24)

Joseph kept the Urim and Thummim constantly about his person, by the use of which he could in a moment tell whether the plates were in any danger. . . . he looked in the Urim and Thummim, and saw that the Record was as yet safe; . . .

(Lucy, Biographical Sketches, 1st ed., pp. 103-104)

That of which I spoke, which Joseph termed a key, was indeed, nothing more nor less than the Urim and Thummim, and it was by this that the angel showed him many things which he saw in vision; by which he could also ascertain, at any time, the approach of danger, either to himself or the Record, and on account of which he always kept the Urim and Thummim about his person.

(Lucy, Biographical Sketches, 1st ed., p. 106)

. . . upon his urgent request, I finally concluded to go down, and see what he wanted, upon which he handed me the breast-plate spoken of in his history.

It was wrapped in a thin muslin handkerchief, so thin that I could see the glistening metal, and ascertain its proportions without any difficulty.

It was concave on one side, and convex on the other, and extended from the neck downwards, as far as the centre of the stomach of a man of extraordinary size. It had four straps of the same material, for the purpose of fastening it to the breast, two of which ran back to go over the shoulders, and the other two were designed to fasten to the hips. They were just the width of two of my fingers, (for I measured them,) and they had holes in the end of them, to be convenient in fastening.

The whole plate was worth at least five hundred dollars: after I had examined it, Joseph placed it in the chest with the Urim and Thummim.

(Lucy, Biographical Sketches, 1st ed., p. 107; cf. E. Stevenson, Reminiscences of the Prophet Joseph, p. 27)

Lucy Mack Smith (cont.)

One morning they sat down to their work, as usual, and the first thing which presented itself through the Urim and Thummim, was a commandment for Joseph and Oliver to repair to the water, and attend the ordinance of Baptism.

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Near this time, as Joseph was translating by means of the Urim and Thummim, he received, instead of the words of the Book, a commandment to write a letter to a man by the name of David Whitmer, who lived in Waterloo, requesting him to come immediately with his team, and convey himself and Oliver to his own residence, as an evil-designing people were seeking to take away his (Joseph's) life, in order to prevent the work of God from going forth to the world.

(Lucy Mack Smith, Biographical Sketches, 1st ed. [1853], pp. 131, 135 ; cf. HC, I:48-49)

William B. Smith

In consequence of his vision, and his having the golden plates and refusing to show them, a great persecution arose against the whole family, and he was compelled to remove into Pennsylvania with the plates, where he translated them by means of the Urim and Thummim, (which he obtained with the plates), and the power of God. The manner in which this was done was by looking into the Urim and Thummim, which was placed in a hat to exclude the light, (the plates lying near by covered up), and reading off the translation, which appeared in the stone by the power of God. He was engaged in this business as he had opportunity for about two years and a half. In the winter of 1829 and thirty, the Book of Mormon, which is the translation of part of the plates he obtained, was published. He then showed the plates to my father and my brothers Hyrum and Samuel, who were witnesses to the truth of the book which was translated from them. I was permitted to lift them as they laid in the pillow-case; but not to see them, as it was contrary to the commands he had received. They weighed about sixty pounds according to the best of my judgment.

(William Smith, William Smith on Mormonism [Lamoni: Herald Steam Book and Job Office, 1883], pp. 11-12; cf. his sermon at Deloit, Iowa, June 8, 1884, as reported in Saints' Herald, 31 [Oct 4, 1884], 643-644)

Interview with William by J. W. Peterson and W. S. Pender, July 4, 1891, in Osterdock, Iowa, and for several days thereafter:

Among other things we inquired minutely about the Urim and Thummim and the breastplate. We asked him what was meant by the expression, "two rims of a bow," which held the former. He said a double silver bow was twisted into the shape of the figure eight, and the two stones were placed literally between the two rims of a bow. At one end was attached a rod which was connected with the outer edge of the right shoulder of the breast-plate. By pressing the head a little forward, the rod held the Urim and Thummim before the eyes much like a pair of spectacles. A pocket was prepared in the breastplate on the left side, immediately over the heart. When not in use the Urim and Thummim was placed in this pocket, the rod being of just the right length to allow it to be so deposited. This instrument could, however, be detached from the breastplate and his brother said Joseph often wore it detached when away from home, but always used it in connection with the breastplate when receiving official communications, and usually so when translating, as it permitted him to have both hands free to hold the plates.

In answer to our question, William informed us that he had, himself, by Joseph's direction, put the Urim and Thummim before his eyes, but could see nothing, as he did not have the gift of a Seer. He also informed us that the instruments were too wide for his eyes, as also for Joseph's, and must have been used by much larger men. The instrument caused a strain on Joseph's eyes, and he sometimes resorted to the plan of covering his eyes with a hat to exclude the light in part. William Smith imparted to us much information regarding other things, but this is about all I remember with regard to the Urim and Thummim.

J. W. Peterson

(Peterson in The Rod of Iron, I:3 (Feb 1924), 6-7; Saints' Herald, 79 (Mar 9, 1932), 238, in J. W. A. Bailey's misleading version of it; cf. Peterson's accounts of the meeting in Deseret Evening News, Saturday, Jan 20, 1894, p. 11, cols. 3-4, and Zion's Ensign, 5:3 (Saturday, Jan 13, 1894), p. 6).

Matthew S. Davis

Congressman Davis' Feb 6, 1840, description of Joseph's Washington Discourse of Winter 1839-40 (from 28 Nov to 21 Dec 1839):

The Mormon Bible, he said, was communicated to him, direct from heaven. If there was such a thing on earth, as the author of it, then he (Smith) was the author; but the idea that he wished to impress was, that he had penned it as dictated by God.

(Roberts, HC, IV:79)

INSPIRATION & TRANSLATION

- I Ne 1:4ff (LDS 1:5ff) Lehi initiated revelation via his heartfelt prayer on behalf of his people.
- I Ne 5:34-5 (LDS 16:28-9) ball (liahona-compass-director) with pointers (spindles-directors) and instructions thereon--the writing appeared and pointers pointed "according to the faith and diligence and heed which we did give unto them."
- I Ne 7:2ff (LDS 22:2ff) revelation made known via the Spirit.
- II Ne 11:78-9 (LDS 26:13) God reveals "himself unto all those who believe in him, by the power of the Holy Ghost," and works among all peoples only "according to their faith."
- II Ne 12:57-64 (LDS 29:7-10) continuing revelation and recapitulation of God's word in second nation confirms the original witness/testimony.
- II Ne 13:4-5 (LDS 31:3) Lord God gives "light unto the understanding," and "unto men according to their language, unto their understanding."
- Jac 3:7-14 (LDS 4:6-11, esp. 8) only by revelation can man know God's ways.
- Enos 5-14 (LDS 4-10, esp. 10) God reveals himself to men "according to their diligence in keeping my commandments."
- Omi 17 (LDS 11) prophecy//revelation
- Omi 35 (LDS 20) Mosiah I interpreted engravings "by the gift and power of God."
- Mos 5:72-6, 9:170 (LDS 8:13-4, 21:28) interpreters/interpretation--"a gift from God."
- Mos 11:115-42 (LDS 26:9-33) Alma seeks counsel via prayer and God responds with law and doctrine.
- Alma 16:128-73 (LDS 32:7-43) faith does not require signs, for faith is not knowledge; one should first have faith/believe and be humble: experiment via a particle of faith, only so that one can believe on only a portion of God's word, as if the word were a seed--a good/true seed being able to grow, unless cast out by unbelief--which the Spirit of the Lord will cause to swell within one's breast. The consequent consciousness of enlargement of one's soul and enlightening of understanding makes the word delicious and provides empirical evidence for goodness of word/seed. Thus, faith is increased. The seed swells sprouts, and begins to grow, strengthening one's faith still more. For, a good seed grows, a bad seed does not. But, finally, step by step, faith becomes dormant in some matters as knowledge becomes perfect and replaces it; the soul swells by the word and light of God. However, the tree and roots must be carefully nourished that good fruit be brought forth. Thus, if neglected, even a good seed can fail to take root or to bear fruit, i.e., the word must be carefully nourished and the fruit of the tree be seen beforehand by faith: that fruit is the fruit of the tree of life--the fruit of everlasting life. A white/pure and precious fruit, the eating of which leaves no hunger or thirst.
- The word/seed need only be planted in one's heart. But it requires faith, diligence, patience, and long-suffering in order to grow.
- Alma 17:71-80 (LDS 37:38-45, esp. 40) director functioned "according to their faith in God."
- Morm 4:14 (LDS 8:12) "And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these."

Inspiration & Translation

Eth 1:88-9 (LDS 3:23-4) stones prepared by Lord "magnify to the eyes of men, these things which ye shall write."

Eth 2:1 (LDS 5:1) Moroni writes according to his memory of the words he was commanded to write. God alone may specify what may be translated.

Moron 7:14 (LDS 7:16) every man has Spirit of Christ in order to tell difference between good and evil; 7:15, good is of God, but evil is of the devil, and things may be judged on this basis.

Moron 10:4-5 (LDS 10:4-5) ask God if word is true with sincerity, real intent, and faith, and all truth will be made known via the Holy Ghost.

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(LDS I Ne 16:10, 16, 26-30, 18:12//18:21, II Ne 5:12, "compass" = "ball")

(LDS Mos 1:16, "ball or director")

(LDS Alma 37:38, 45, "ball or director" = Liahona, "compass")

(LDS Omni 20-22, Mosiah 8:13-9//21:27-8, 28:11-20, "interpreters," Alma* 37:21-6, "directors," Eth 3:23, 28, 4:5, "interpreters," "gift from God," "two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow," used by "seer" = "interpreters"; "directors"; "two stones" given to brother of Jared to "magnify to the eyes of men these things which ye shall write" = "interpreters")

*LDS Alma 37:24, "interpreters" is incorrect--Original and Printer's MSS read "directors," which has always been correctly used in RLDS editions, and in LDS editions until 1920.

"Urim and Thummim" can be found in no early Mormon source (published or unpublished) before 1832-33, and all D&C sections which appear to read otherwise are late alterations. However, this fact in no way changes the substantive meaning of those sections.

Fragment in hand of Oliver Cowdery (?) on LDS Archives film f 181 (SLC, 1956), published in Modern Microfilm Co., Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar (SLC, 1966), and mentioned by James R. Clark in Book of Mormon Institute, Dec. 5, 1959, BYU Lecture Series (Provo, 1960), p. 58; the frag. begins with a quote from Jacob 5:13,

English (for it grieveth me that I should lose this tree & the fruit thereof

Hebrew (opin zemim ezmon E, zu ones iss veris etzir ens venis venerir

English Brethren I bid you adieu

Hebrew (iss E zamtri

(The Book of Mormon)
(L. C.)

The interpreters of Languages
(O. C.)

Written & kept for profit and learning (Oliver

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Sheet in hand of Frederick G. Williams on Reel # 1 of the LDS Revelations Collection (Kirtland Revelation Book), MS d 4583 fd 5; described by B. H. Roberts, New Witnesses for God (SLC, 1951), III:501-2; photo in N. C. Williams, Meet Dr. F. G. Williams: After One Hundred Years (Independence, 1951), facing p. 102; characters classified in SEHA Newsletter, 122 (Sept 1970), pp. 4 (fig. 4), 6; sheet opens with a version of D&C 7 = Book of Commandments 6, and closes with a statement on "the course that Lehi traveled . . ." (studied by R. J. Matthews, BYU Studies, 12:312-4; quoted as a revelation to Joseph in Richards & Little, Compendium, 1882-98, p. 289, and 1925, p. 272; contradicted in T&S, III:22:922),

------(ruling line)
Questions asked in English & answered in hebrew

For it grieveth me that I should lose this tree & the fruit thereof.

Am opin zemim ezmon E, zu oms iss veris etzer ensvones vineris -----

English Brethren I bid you adieu

Am iss E zamtri

------(ruling line)

Charactors on the book of Mormon

The book of Mormon
(L. C.)

The interpreters of Languages
(O. C.)

The course that Lehi traveled

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*Maquardt suggests initials O.C.
for Oliver Cowdery.*

The Book of Mormon as an Ancient Document

D. PALEOGRAPHY

1. No official reproduction of the script from the plates is known.
2. So-called "Anthon Transcript" (PCP, Joseph Smith 2:61-5), in RLDS Church Historian's Office.
 - a. All studies ought to follow the right-to-left numbering of "Caractors" by Ariel L. Crowley, About the Book of Mormon (SLC: Deseret, 1961), p. 36 (see also pp. 6, 11, 17, 19) = Era, 45 (Jan-Feb-Mar 1942); 47 (Sept 1944).
 - b. Identified by D. J. Nelson as possible hieratic, reading in the correct right-to-left manner (Joseph Smith's "Eye of Ra", p. 26, pl. 17, item 6).
 - c. Identified by James E. Homans ("R. C. Webb") as "hieratic" (The Case Against Mormonism, 1915, pp. 22-3; Joseph Smith as a Translator, 1936, p. 4).
 - d. Discussed and classified by C. H. Jones in BYU SEHA Newsletter, 122 (Sept 1970), 1-8.
 - e. Discussed by Stanley B. Kimball in BYU SEHA Newsletter, 126 (Aug 1971), 1-5.
 - 1) W. C. Hayes saw it as a possibly inaccurate copy of hieratic.
 - 2) J. A. Wilson and A. H. Gardiner saw in it no Egyptian of any kind (Kimball, pp. 1-2, citing P. Hanson, Saints' Herald, 103: 1099).
 - f. John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Codex," Oct 1973 SEHA Symposium presentation at BYU, challenges the authenticity of the Anthon Transcript as commonly accepted, positing a lost document of a different nature.
3. Characters in LDS Church Historian's Office.
 - a. Fragment with characters and accompanying handwriting attributed to Oliver Cowdery.
 - 1) Mentioned by James R. Clark in the Book of Mormon Institute, Dec 5, 1959, BYU Lecture Series (Provo, 1960), p. 58.
 - 2) Photo from LDS Church Archives film f 181 (1956) published in Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar (SLC: Modern Microfilm, 1966), appearing in same sheet series as Eg. Ms #5 (O. Cowdery), Fac. 2 drawing, etc.
 - b. Sheet with same characters and accompanied by handwriting of Frederick G. Williams (LDS Archives MS d 4583 fd 5 on Reel #1 of the Revelations Collection microfilm).

The Book of Mormon as an Ancient Document

- 1) Described by B. H. Roberts as on a sheet beginning with D&C 7 (BC 6), having a quote from Jacob 5:13, and endorsed by Ezra G. Williams on the reverse, April 11, 1864 (New Witnesses for God, 1951, III:501-2); the sheet closes with a description of "The course that Lehi traveled"
 - 2) Photo published in Nancy C. Williams, Meet Dr. Frederick Granger Williams . . . After One Hundred Years! (Independence: Zion's Printing and Publ., 1951), facing p. 102—dated to Sunday, 27 March 1836, at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.
 - 3) Mentioned and classified by C. H. Jones in BYU SEHA Newsletter, 122 (Sept 1970), pp. 4 (fig. 4), 6, "The characters and their translations were written by Joseph Smith on the back of the original copy of an early revelation." Jones reports "impressive" results with a demotic dictionary for the word "Mormon."
- c. The epigraphy of "Book" is provisionally identified by R. F. Smith as early demotic Egyptian md3t, "book" (John Rylands Papyrus, VI, D 1, 'I^h-ms II, 570-525 B.C.; in W. Erichsen, Auswahl frueh-demotischer Texte, p. 108 b; cf. Pyr 267b, and CT III 240/1b [225]).
- 1) The phrase "Book of Mormon" occurs only in Mormon 1:1 and on the title page, both to be dated to the late 4th century A.D., and therefore in so-called "reformed Egyptian" (Mormon 9:32). Some continuity with early demotic is thereby indicated.
- d. The word "Mormon" is analyzed by Joseph Smith himself as a combination of contracted English "more" and an "Egyptian" word mon, "good" (Times & Seasons, IV, May 14, 1843, p. 194; J. M. Sjodahl, Era, 30, March 1927, pp. 433-4). Cf. Coptic (m)mon, (m)man, "truly, verily, indeed"? Sjodahl suggests that the derivation of this mon is via Eg. mn, "be firm, established, enduring," as a good quality, and/or Eg. 'Imn, "Amon, Amun" (in G. Reynolds, Dictionary of the Book of Mormon, 3rd & 4th eds., 1929 and 1954, p. 306, citing Budge, Gods of the Egyptians, II:2, and Champollion, Precis du systeme hieroglyphique des anciens egyptiens, 1827-28, p. 91; see also J. E. Homans ("R. C. Webb"), JSAT, pp. 60-72).
- e. "The Interpreters of Languages," i.e. Urim and Thummim, are placed over nearly twin characters. In each case, two dots are included which may reflect the two stones traditionally contained in the ideogram of the High Priest of Rē^c, the "Great Seer" of Ōn-Heliopolis, the Wr-m3(w), and Nibley suggests a relationship to the wr and tm worn around the neck of the "Great Seer" (Dialogue, III:2, p. 104). The two stones or pupils vary with an eye (Urk. IV, 1542, 16; Gardiner, AEO, I:36*; II:267*; M. I. Moursi, Die Hohenpriester des Sonnengottes von der Früzeit Ägyptens bis zum Ende des neuen Reiches, Münchener Ägyptologisches Studien 26, 1972, pp. 147-54). Cf. m33 in P. JS X, iv, 11; Israel Stele 4 (ZAS, 34:2), etc. Stones are often connected with revelation and lot-casting (cf. purim; see

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BASOR, 67:37; Gospel of Philip, Logion 12; Gospel of Thomas, Logion 19; John 1:42 in Joseph Smith's Inspired Revision).

- 1) The phrase "Interpreters of Languages" occurs nowhere in the Book of Mormon, though the meaning could be inferred from all four instances of "interpreters" (Mos 8:13, 19; 28:20, Ether 4:5; cf. HC, I:18-21; Alma 37:24 reads "directors" in the early MSS).

PALEOGRAPHY

1. Anthon Transcript of Feb 1828 (April 1980 M. Hofmann Acquisition, LDS Historical Dept.), obverse with seven vertical columns, one circular register, and five horizontal registers of over 240 "characters," nearly all of which appear (badly copied) in the secondary "Anthon Transcript" (which see below at 2.), and in the following published sources:
 - a. "Stick of Joseph" placard, 1844, with three horizontal lines containing about 15 characters not on the secondary "Anthon Transcript," but to be seen in the first and final vertical columns of the Mark Hofmann original. Published in Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History (1922), p. 63, and Ariel L. Crowley, About the Book of Mormon (1961), p. 11.
 - b. Same 15 characters, mostly upside down and reversed, with the same three lines copied in Sam Brannan's newspaper, The Prophet, 31 (Dec 21, 1844), 2, and in M. T. Lamb, The Golden Bible (1887), p. 261 (also in Crowley, About the Book of Mormon, p. 17, and Roberts, New Witnesses for God, 2nd ed. [1926], II:93).
 - c. The original transcript itself was described twice by Prof. Charles Anthon:
 - 1) letter to E. D. Howe of Feb 17, 1834, published by Howe and Philastus Hurlbut in their Mormonism Unveiled (1834), pp. 270-272 = History of Mormonism (1840), pp. 270-272, describing Greek & Hebrew letters, crosses, flourishes, and Roman letters inverted or sideways, placed in vertical columns, and ending in a circle with compartments similar to the Mexican calendar by von Humboldt.
 - 2) letter to T. W. Coit of Apr 3, 1841, published in The Church Record, I (Apr 24, 1841), 231-232, and John A. Clark, Gleanings by the Way (1842), pp. 233-238, describing distorted Greek, Hebrew, and other letters mingled with half moons, stars, etc., disposed in columns (as in the Chinese mode), and ending with a crude representation of the Mexican zodiac.
 - d. John A. Clark, Episcopal priest in Palmyra, was shown the same transcript by Harris and he described it as containing "three or four lines of characters," but he was able to identify only one letter as possibly a Hebrew η , Gleanings, p. 228—see his letters from Palmyra, Aug 24, 1840, and from Fairfield, Aug 31, 1840, in The Episcopal Recorder (Phila., 1840), and in his Gleanings, chapters 22 and 24.
 - e. According to Stanley B. Kimball, Prof. Samuel L. Mitchill (Mitchell) left no papers confirming or describing any meeting with Harris (unpublished).
 - f. The reverse side of the transcript contains the following ink description in the hand and with the signature of "Joseph Smith Jr.":
 - 1) "These ^hcaractors were dilligently copied by my own hand from the plates of gold and given to Martin Harris^h ^{who took them} to new york City but the learned could not translate it because the Lord would not open it to them in fulfilment of the propecy of Isah^h ⁱwritten in the 29th chapter and 11th verse."

- 2) this compares favorably with his 1831-1832 account (Joseph Smith Letterbook, Kirtland, p. 5, lines 17-30) in the same hand and spelling (BYU Studies, 9:278ff.; Paul Cheesman, "An Analysis of the Accounts Relating to Joseph Smith's Early Visions," unpubl. master thesis [BYU, 1965], pp. 131-132).
2. Secondary "Anthon Transcript" with poorly copied "Caractors" in seven horizontal lines, in RLDS Historical Dept. (April 1903 Whitmer heirs acquisition), Independence, MO, published in M. T. Lamb, The Golden Bible (1887), p. 342; William H. Kelley, Presidency and Priesthood (1890-91/1908/1972), facing p. 204; Edward Stevenson, Reminiscences of Joseph Smith the Prophet (1893), p. 32; Joseph Smith III, and H. C. Smith, eds., History of the Reorganized Church, I (1896), p. 22; B. H. Roberts, New Witnesses for God, II (1903), pp. 45, 71-72; Comprehensive History of the Church, I (1930), p. 106; New Witnesses for God, 2nd ed., II:94; C. H. Jones in SEHA Newsletter, 122 (Sept 1970), 1.
- a. All studies may conveniently follow the right-to-left numbering of the over 225 "Caractors" by Ariel Crowley, About the Book of Mormon (SLC: Deseret, 1961), p. 36 (cf. also pp. 6, 11, 17, 19) = Improvement Era, 45 (Jan - Mar 1942); BYU Studies, 19 (Fall 1978), 39; cf. Heman C. Smith in Saints' Herald, 25 (Nov 1, 1878), 322; Israel A. Smith in Saints' Herald, 89 (Feb 28 and Oct 3, 1942), 262ff., 1257ff.
- b. D. H. Bays, Doctrines and Dogmas of Mormonism Examined and Refuted (1897), pp. 261-262, published the views of two orientalist and one Egyptologist provided in response to his 1896 letters setting them up with false information accompanying copies of the "Anthon Transcript," e.g., that the Mormons claimed the characters thereon to be "Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyrian and Arabic"; also published in Shook and Tanner & Tanner, below.
- 1) unnamed Prof. of Oriental Languages, Univ. of Michigan, Ann Arbor, 1896, saw only some resemblance to Aramaic (Chaldaic) s, h, g, t, l, b, n, but no Assyrian.
 - 2) Charles H. S. Davis, Meriden, CT, 1896, saw no letters from "the alphabet of any oriental language," but instead random characters put down by an ignoramus--"with no resemblance to anything, not even shorthand."
 - 3) Charles E. Moldenke, Jerusalem, 27 Dec 1896, replied to Bays' letter of 23 Nov 1896, stating that the Book of Mormon was a fraud because Egyptian, Chaldaic, and Assyrian characters should hardly be found mixed together, and, second, some signs were reminiscent "of the Mesa Inscription, yet none have any resemblance to Assyrian or Egyptian."
- c. Charles A. Shook, Cumorah Revisited (1910), chapter X: He claims that Nephi I was the inventor of "reformed Egyptian" (p. 508), that the Mormon plates were a fraud simply because the the characters are neither oriental nor precolumbian American--buttressing his opinion that the orientalist consulted by Bays did not disagree among themselves with a letter to the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, R. Rathbun (pp. 531-535):
- 1) Shook letter of Jan 15, 1908, and R. Rathbun reply of Jan 28, 1908, with assurances of I. M. Casanowicz of the Division of Historic Archaeology that the characters were not Egyptian, Chaldaic, Assyrian, or Arabic, and that they had not been found on any American monument or manuscript (p. 535).

- 2) Shook proceeds to prove that the transcript is quite unlike Maya glyphs (pp. 535-538), but that at least 36 characters on the transcript are similar to or "identical with" common English letters, numbers, and symbols (pp. 538-9; also published in Tanner & Tanner, Archaeology and the Book of Mormon [1969], p. 69).
- d. Identified by James Edward Homans (aka "Dr. R. C. Webb") as hieratic Egyptian (The Case Against Mormonism [1915], pp. 22-23; Joseph Smith as a Translator [1936], p. 4).
- e. William F. Albright memo dated 1 Dec 1949, prepared by Wesley P. Walters, includes the observation that it makes no sense to compare selected characters from the Anthon Transcript with Egyptian scripts from widely separated periods (as Crowley had done); apparently having been told by Walters that "reformed Egyptian" was claimed by Mormons to have been a language used in the ancient Near East, Albright said that there was no such language.
- f. Paul M. Hanson, Saints' Herald, 103 (Nov 12, 1956), 1098-99, sent copies of the "Anthon Transcript" to three Egyptologists recommended by W. F. Albright:
- 1) John A. Wilson letter of 7 June 1956 to Hanson, seeing no known kind of Egyptian writing; the cursive appeared abnormal, the pen usually remaining on the papyrus surface to join groups of characters which here stand "suspiciously separated from each other," and an association analysis of three characters showed no pattern--their associates were suspiciously varied" (p. 1098).
 - 2) Alan H. Gardiner letter of 8 June 1956 to Hanson, seeing "no resemblance between the characters . . . and any form of Egyptian writing" (p. 1098).
 - 3) W. C. Hayes letter of 8 June 1956 to Hanson, suggesting it to be an inaccurate copy of actual hieratic, that many of the character "groups look like hieratic numerals," and that the beginning of the transcript might "be taken as a date" (p. 1098).
 - 4) Hanson sums up by doubting that the transcript can be translated by modern Egyptologists (p. 1099).
- g. M. Harvey Seibel stated that 97 of the 135 separate "Characters" in the "Anthon Transcript" are "exact duplicates of those found in a demotic dictionary"--Zion's Advocate, 36 (Feb 1959), 23.
- h. Identified by Dee Jay Nelson as possible hieratic, reading in the correct right-to-left manner (Joseph Smith's "Eye of Ra", Aug 1968, p. 26, pl. 17, item 6).
- i. Three unnamed Egyptologists surveyed by Jerald & Sandra Tanner "recently examined the Anthon Transcript. One felt that the characters resembled demotic. Another thought they looked like abbreviated hieratic, and the third stated that they were nothing but 'doodlings'" (Archaeology and the Book of Mormon [1969], pp. 15, 69).
- j. Discussed and classified by Carl H. Jones in BYU SEHA Newsletter, 122 (Sept 1970), 1-8.
- k. Discussed by Stanley B. Kimball in SEHA Newsletter, 126 (Aug 1971), 1-5, and BYU Studies, 10 (Spring 1970), 325, noting his personal interview

with Egyptologist W. C. Hayes (as by letter to Hanson, above):

- 1) Hayes told Kimball that the transcript was possibly an inaccurate copy of actual hieratic.
1. A. C. Lambert, "The Most Probable Sources of the Book of Mormon 'Characters'," unpublished MS, expanded and revised (Aug 1972), 2 vols., in Western Americana section of Univ. of Utah Library, Register 6, MS 35, Register of the Papers of Asael C. Lambert, fBk 2, and Bk 1, box 5 [in 1979, D. J. Buerger listed this as Ref. #IX. folio Book 2, Book of Mormon, Uof U Special Collections, and states that Lambert compares numerous magical symbols with the characters; see for example, A. E. Waite, Book of Ceremonial Magic . . . Illustrated [1962 reprint], pp. 118-9, 121-9, 162, 185, 195, 226, 269, 274, and The Book of Black Magic and of Facts).
- m. John L. Sorenson, "The Book of Mormon as a Mesoamerican Codex," Oct 1973 SEHA Symposium presentation at BYU, challenged the authenticity of the "Anthon Transcript" as commonly accepted, positing a lost document or documents of a different nature (so Shook and Roberts!)--published in SEHA Newsletter, 139 (Dec 1976), 1-9.
- n. Padilla Forgery--Ray T. Matheny, BYU Studies, 19 (Fall 1978), 21-40.
- o. Other recent but mostly unpublished suggestions of the origin of the so-called "Anthon Transcript" have included the notion that it is based on Masonic ciphers available to Joseph Smith, e.g., the code key used by the Royal Arch of Solomon Degree (13th) of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry (R. Hullinger, Mormon Answer to Skepticism [1980], pp. 94, 109; David John Buerger has extensive unpublished correlative data on this issue). One researcher considered the transcript to be a very modified or distorted form of demotic Egyptian and discerned the name "Nephi" in several places. Another found the name "Lehi." At least five other attempts had been made to translate the transcript (or parts of it) as cursive Egyptian, but none got beyond the preliminary stage, and their proposals were no better than those made earlier by Ariel Crowley.
3. Additional characters in LDS Historical Dept., SLC, UT:
 - a. Fragment with characters and accompanying handwriting attributed to Oliver Cowdery.
 - 1) Mentioned by James R. Clark in the Book of Mormon Institute, Dec 5, 1959, BYU Lecture Series (Provo, 1960), p. 58.
 - 2) Photo from LDS Archives film f 181 (1956), published in Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet & Grammar [sic] (Modern Microfilm, 1966), appearing in same sheet series as Eg. Ms #5 (O. Cowdery), Fac. 2 drawing, etc.
 - b. Sheet with same characters and accompanied by handwriting of Frederick G. Williams (LDS Archives MS d 4583 fd 5 on Reel #1 of the Revelations Collection microfilm).
 - 1) Described by B. H. Roberts as on a sheet beginning with D&C 7 (BoFC 6), having a quote from Jacob 5:13, and endorsed by Ezra G. Williams on the reverse side, April 11, 1864 (New Witnesses for God [1951], III:501-502); the sheet closes with a description of "The course that Lehi traveled . . ."